

FROM THE SOUTH.

LATE NEWS FROM SYDNEY, AUCKLAND AND SOUTH SEAS.

Brisbane is Visited by a Terrible Flood Which Renders Many People Homeless.

BRISBANE, Feb. 6th.—Brisbane has been visited by a calamity in the shape of a flood which is beyond comparison more disastrous than any ever before experienced in Australia. Rain had been falling almost constantly for some days, but it being for the most part light, no serious consequences were expected until last Friday week, when reports from the Upper Brisbane watershed showed that a heavy flood was inevitable, and all possible efforts were made to prepare for it. But the very worst fears that could have been entertained fell far short of the terrible reality. The high flood of 1890 made the record up to the present time, and it was thought that the limit of possibility was then reached. Unfortunately, however, that flood has become almost insignificant by comparison with the present disaster. The waters rose very rapidly, and the level of the big flood had been reached. Still the rain poured down unceasingly, and the waters continued to rise until the maximum height was reached yesterday night week, the level being then about twelve feet above the flood of 1890. The scene was then terrible. A very large portion of Brisbane and suburbs, and the whole of the surrounding country in every direction, were inundated, the water being in many places over the tops of the houses. In Brisbane and its immediate vicinity some thousands of houses were submerged, and many hundreds of families were forced to seek such shelter as was obtainable on the higher ground, many losing all they possessed, and barely escaping with their lives. Rescue boats were hard at work in all directions, removing the people to places of safety. Many were clinging to their places so long that they could only be removed with the greatest difficulty. Everything possible was done to afford shelter to the homeless and to relieve immediate distress, but the misery among the poorer families was very great. A large portion of the city itself was under water, all the wholesale warehouses and many other business establishments being flooded in Queen street, the principal business street. The water rose to a height of about 4 feet in the front Courier office, flooring, and all the lower floors of the premises in that locality. The machine room of the Courier was more than 40 feet under water. South Brisbane suffered more severely than the north side, the whole of the business portion and a large part of the residence area being totally submerged. In Stanley street, the principal street in South Brisbane, the water must have reached a height of 20 feet in places, and in more exposed localities the destruction was appalling. Hundreds of houses were swept bodily away and carried down the river, or piled against the railway embankment which runs through that portion of the town. The lower part of Kangaroo Point has been almost entirely swept away, what now remains being simply a mass of wreckage in heaps.

The Gilbert Islands.

By an American vessel, the Tarawa, which reached Sydney direct from the Gilbert Islands, there arrived two representatives of the principal firms doing business in that group. They report that since the islands were taken under a British protectorate a very marked improvement has taken place in the social and commercial habits of the people. The rules laid down by Captain Davis, of H. M. S. Royalist, at the time of the declaration of the protectorate, for the guidance of the chiefs in their dealings with the natives, have in the main been followed, and this splendid archipelago at no previous time in its history has been so prosperous as it is at present. The tribal wars, the vexatious and tyrannical laws, the corporal punishment of females, and many other semi-civilized customs are no longer practiced or enforced. "All that is wanted now," say these visitors, "is that a duly qualified British Resident be appointed by Her Majesty." Americans and Germans residing in the group unanimously praise the action taken by Captain Davis, and heartily welcome the advent of a stable government under the British flag. Such is the testimony of the gentlemen who have now arrived in Sydney, and their many years of residence in the group, and personal knowledge of the commercial habits of the people, as well as the resources of the islands themselves, make the testimony of special value. With regard to the trade of the Gilberts, they state that the export of copra is chiefly direct to Europe. Business on a considerable scale is done with San Francisco, and two Sydney houses also trade with the group. A strong feeling is entertained in the islands with respect to visits made by labor-recruiting vessels, and it is fervently hoped that the traffic will be prohibited. Respecting a cablegram published from our London correspondent to the effect that a movement, headed by King Teburimua of Butaritari, was about to petition the American Government to protest against the British annexation of the islands, and asking for an American protectorate, the passengers by the Tarawa state that the Butaritari monarch's influence is of minor importance, taking the whole of the inhabitants, foreign and native, in the Gilberts, and that when they left there on the 8th of last month the position of affairs in the group was as stated—entirely in the hands of the British administration throughout the islands.—[Sydney Herald.]

Another Wreck.

Another wreck of a Sydney-owned vessel is reported. The news came

from the Solomon Islands by the schooner Renard, and is to the effect that when the Renard was in the group she fell in with another island trader, the Lillian Grace, and from her obtained brief particulars of the loss of the schooner Sandfly of this port. It is a coincidence that the news of the wreck was brought by a sister vessel to the Sandfly, and that both were originally built here years ago for the Admiralty, and flew the white ensign. The Sandfly, Renard, Beagle, and another formed the quartette of survey gunboats referred to. It was in the Beagle that Bell and Davis left Melbourne. The Sandfly now lies on a reef off San Christoval, one of the Solomon Islands; a third ex-gunboat remains in port doing service as a hulk, leaving the Renard the only one of the four in active service as a merchantman. The circumstances attending the loss of the Sandfly briefly are that she struck on a reef, and the crew took to the boats and went to Ugi to Mr. Stevens' station. From there boats subsequently set out for the scene of the wreck in the hope of securing salvage. The schooner was partly loaded with copra, and was bound to Sydney at the time the accident occurred. Her owner, Mr. Kirkpatrick, was on board and in charge of the Sandfly. It was his intention, after securing what he could from the wreck, to come on to Sydney by the brigantine Borough Belle.

A Captain Murdered.

The German warship Spierber arrived at Sydney from the Islands on February 6th. During her island patrol the Spierber visited Samoa, then went on to the German island possessions in the Pacific, visiting Jaluit in the Marshall Islands, New Britain, the Fea Islands, the Admiralty Group, and German New Guinea. A flying visit was also made to Queen Carol Harbor, Boku Island, in the German division of the Solomon Group. While at New Britain the Spierber received word of the murder of Capt. Stallo, a well-known island shipmaster, under circumstances given in these columns some time ago. The German warship proceeded to the island at which the outrage took place, and arrested two natives who were found to be implicated in the crime. It was found that the actual murderers had paid the penalty for the death of Capt. Stallo with their lives, having been shot soon after the shipmaster was killed. The two natives arrested by the Spierber were therefore sentenced to a mitigated term of imprisonment, and were eventually transported from the Fea Islands, the scene of the murder, to German New Guinea, for a period of five years. At the German headquarters in New Guinea, the Spierber found that the white population had escaped the New Guinea fever, except in a mild form in a few instances, but amongst the natives a good deal of mortality had taken place. It is intended that the German warship shall remain at Sydney for five or six weeks before returning to Samoa, awaiting the arrival of the Bussard, now in Sydney.

Destruction at New Hebrides.

Island news by the trading steamers Lubek and Rockton at Sydney, states that at the New Hebrides the settlers are naturally despondent at the withdrawal of the little Government assistance given towards maintaining steam communication from Sydney. Under existing arrangements the next trip of the Rockton will be the last that will be made from Sydney to the New Hebrides, and the steamer Croydon, which has been so useful in the inter-island service, is also to go on to Sydney. In future the commerce between Sydney and the fine group of islands mentioned will be carried on by sailing vessels. The French residents take a different view of the matter, and regard it as a favorable precursor of the annexation of the group under the French flag, which they consider is inevitable. The group has already this year been visited by a terrific hurricane. A small vessel belonging to the Australasian New Hebrides Company of Sydney, named the Mona, was caught in it while at anchor, and narrowly escaped wreckage. The crew cut away the masts to ease the vessel, and this expedient had the desired effect. They subsequently took her to Annetum to refit. The steamer Croydon was also in the hurricane between Aoba and Santo on the 15th January. The lowest reading of the barometer was 28.50, and a terrible sea, with blinding rain, prevailed for five hours. Great destruction of the French company's coffee plantations is reported in the Seagood Channel, and a small schooner was seen lying broadside on to the beach in the Malo Pass. It is feared several lives were lost. Some of the centre islands in the New Hebrides received but little damage, but on Mallicollo and Aoba fearful havoc was wrought by the storm. Tongan news includes particulars of disaster at one of the islands from a hurricane. Two European and native churches, a Free church, and a Wesleyan church, were blown down, and many dwellings were destroyed. The natives are likely to suffer from a partial famine, the tornado having cleared off the bread-fruit plantations for miles.

Outrage By Natives.

Solomon Island reports received Feb. 17th, include brief particulars of another outrage by natives. A trading schooner, the Siskin, employed in the group bartering for copra and collecting produce in exchange for merchandise, was at Cape Pitt when one of her boat's crew was, it is stated, attacked by the islanders and three of the number (all natives) were killed. With this exception the accounts received from the group are of a brisk trade being done, and of a better feeling toward the white traders on the part of the natives right through the group.

Fighting Sailors.

From Fiji, advices received state that the visit of H. M. S. Daphne, to Suva, while on her way to the China station from the North Pacific, will be remembered by the residents of the Fiji capital, and that unfavorably. Two deliberate attempts on the part of some sailors, it is alleged, were made to kill a sergeant of police and a civilian. The assaults were made with knives. So bad did matters become in the quiet town of Suva that the native-armed constabulary were called out, and this demonstration on the

part of the authorities put an end to the difficulty.

To Recognise a Consul.

Lord Rosebery, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, has expressed regret that Captain E. H. M. Davis, of H. M. S. Royalist, declined to conditionally recognize Mr. Adolf Rick as United States Consul at Butaritari on the occasion of a British protectorate being proclaimed over the Gilbert Islands. British officials have been instructed to recognize Mr. Rick.

Pago Pago Harbor.

In view of the visit of H. M. S. Curaco, with Mr. Haggard, British Land Commissioner in Samoa, to the harbor of Pago Pago, General J. W. Foster, Secretary of State in President Harrison's Cabinet, has informed Lord Rosebery that the vested rights of the United States in that place have not lapsed.

Miscellaneous.

SYDNEY, Feb. 23.—Bennett, the late manager of the Paddington branch of the English and Scottish Chartered Bank, who was convicted of embezzling large sums of money belonging to that institution has been sentenced to ten years' imprisonment.

LONDON, Feb. 22.—Canada and the United States are responding freely to Mr. Justin McCarthy's appeal for monetary assistance.

LONDON, Feb. 23.—It is proposed that a deputation comprising 5000 of the people of Ulster should wait on Mr. Gladstone, protesting against Home Rule for Ireland.

VIENNA, Feb. 23.—Cholera is raging in the Russian provinces near the Austrian frontier, and a thousand cases are under treatment. Four hundred deaths were recorded for the month ending February.

LONDON, Feb. 22.—The Right Hon. Robert William Duff, M.P. for Banffshire, has been appointed to succeed Lord Jersey as Governor of New South Wales.

ST. PETERSBURG, Feb. 22.—Owing to the poll-tax imposed by the Government, fifty thousand people have abandoned their homes, and will leave the country. A quarter of a million people are starving in Finland.

AFFAIRS AT SAMOA.

Interview With Robert Louis Stevenson, the Novelist.

Amongst the passengers who arrived here this afternoon from Samoa by the Oceanic Steamship Company's mail steamer Mariposa (from San Francisco via the Navigator Islands), was Mr. R. L. Stevenson, the distinguished novelist. Mr. Stevenson is accompanied by his wife. When interviewed by a Star representative this afternoon, Mr. Stevenson looked pale and rather ill, and his health did not appear to have very greatly benefited by his sojourn in Samoa. He has now made a home near Apia, and has quite settled down as a Samoan resident. Mr. Stevenson does not land at Auckland, but is bound for Sydney on business. He will remain in Sydney for a short stay with his wife, and will then return to Samoa. "Things in Samoa just now," he said, "are about as bad as they can be. There is no money in the Treasury and not a single salary has been paid for the last four months, either to the Municipal Magistrate—to the native police or the Custom officers; in fact, the only men who have got their salaries have been the two officials appointed by the Powers. A radical change of some sort or other is needed in Samoa."

Mr. Stevenson was asked, "Are you, as a resident of Samoa, in favor of the annexation of those islands by any one of the three Powers now interested in the country?" Mr. Stevenson replied that he did not know exactly in what light his answer would be looked on in some quarters, "but," he went on to say, "I can tell you that every day deepens my conviction that annexation will be the best thing that could happen to Samoa. I won't say what Powers should, in my opinion, annex it, but I am certain that annexation is the only cure for the present state of things down there."

It may be added in connection with the state of affairs in Samoa that Mr. Stevenson considers that the charges made by him against the officials at Apia, are directly supported in every particular by the German White book lately issued.—Auckland Star.

THE OAHU RAILROAD.

What Annexation Means for a Prominent Industry.

Mr. B. F. Dillingham, who is now in New York, writes under date of February 20th to a gentleman of this city, as follows:

The outlook for brighter days in Hawaii under the stars and stripes seems good. Whether the Senate will ratify the treaty for annexation in time for the news to go back by this steamer of March 3d I cannot now say. It may be that the business will be held over by Democratic influence until after the 4th of March; but that it will be an accomplished fact within sixty days I have little or no doubt, unless some new and unexpected complication should arise. The Lancashire Mortgage Trust and Insurance Corporation had just decided to take up our bonds when the news of revolution came to hand. I do not expect to meet with much delay after the ratification of the annexation treaty. "Let Patience have her perfect work."

The following Japanese immigrants that arrived by the Mike Maru were shipped Thursday afternoon on the steamer Lehua: Wai-akea Mill Co., 30 men and 8 women; Hakalau Plantation, 50 men and 13 women; Hilo Sugar Co., 50 men and 13 women.

William Love tendered his resignation as Secretary of the Board of Fire Commissioners. He will be succeeded by Thomas E. Wall.

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